

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 8785

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: POLITICAL TURBULENCE FOLLOWING NEAR GOVERNMENT CRISIS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: WEEK FOLLOWING FOUR PARTY ACCORD TO AVOID A GOVERNMENT CRISIS WAS CHARACTERIZED BY QUALIFIED APPROVAL OF THE AGREEMENT BY THE SOCIALIST AND REPUBLICAN PARTY LEADERSHIPS, FERMENT IN THE DC AND UNRELATED DRAMATIC RESIGNATION OF MSI CO-PRESIDENT, ADMIRAL BIRINDELLI. END SUMMARY.

2. PRIME MINISTER RUMOR IS NOW SLATED TO PRESENT GOVERNMENT'S NEW ECONOMIC PROGRAM TO CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES THURSDAY, JUNE 27, AND TO SENATE PROBABLY EARLY NEXT WEEK. THIS MORNING, JUNE 25, SOCIALIST PARTY DIRECTORATE GAVE ITS RATIFICATION TO ACCORD WITH ONLY SMALL LEFT-WING LOMBARDI FACTION IN OPPOSITION. IN DIRECTORATE DEBATE, PSI SECRETARY DE MARTINO IMPLIED STRONGLY THAT PSI APPROVAL IS BASED ON ASSUMPTION THAT IN IMPLEMENTING ACCORDS GOVERNMENT WILL SOLICIT VIEWPOINTS OF BOTH UNIONS AND "CONSTITUTIONAL OPPOSITION" (I.E., COMMUNISTS AND LIBERALS).

3. OVER WEEKEND REPUBLICAN PARTY NATIONAL COUNCIL DECLARED IT FOUND LAST WEEK'S CENTER-LEFT AGREEMENT "ACCEPTABLE", BUT "ONLY A PARTIAL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE COUNTRY." THE COUNCIL ALSO CONVOKED A NATIOAL CONGRESS FOR THIS COMING NEVEMBER. DURING COUNCIL DELIBERATIONS, VARIOUS PRI LEADERS INDICATED THAT THEY ANTICIPATE THAT THIS COMING FALL THERE WILL BE NEED FOR A
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FURTHER "CLARIFICATION" OF THE GOVERNMENT'S WILL TO CONFRONT

ITALY'S SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

4. FERMENT IN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT PARTY AND GROWING CRITICISMS OF PARTY SECRETARY FANFANI CAME TO THE FORRE AT A JUNE 21 PARTY DIRECTORATE MEETING WHEN THE TWO LEFT WING FORZE NUOVE MEMBERS ON THE 11-MAN PARTY SECRETARIAT ABSTAINED ON A DOCUMENT APPROVING THE CONDUCT OF THE PARTY SECRETARY DURING THE RECENT GOVERNMENT CRISIS. FANFANI THEREUPON DECLARED THAT THEY HAD RESIGNED THEIR POSITIONS AND CALLED A DIRECTORATE MEETING FOR JUNE 25 TO DECIDE UPON THEIR REPLACEMENTS. AT TODAY'S MEETING THE BASE AND MOROTEO FACTIONS CALLED FOR THE MATTER TO BE PUT OFF FOR DEBATE UNTIL THE SCHEDULED JULY 12-15 DC NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING. THEIR PROPOSAL WAS DEFEATED AND LORENZO NATALI (FANFANI FACTION), HEAD OF THE DC SOCIAL PROGRAM OFFICE, TOOK OVER THE POSITIONS VACATED BY BODRATO AND DONAT-CATTIN. ON THE FINAL VOTE ALL OR MOST OF THE FORZE NUOVE, BASE AND MOROTEO DIRECTORATE MEMBERS PRESENT ABSTAINED AND SECRETARIAT MEMBER BELCI (MOROTEO) AND VICE SECRETARY MARCORA (BASE) RESIGNED THEIR PARTY POSTS. ASKED FOR HIS OPINION OF THE VOTE OUTCOME, FANFANI EMPHASIZED THAT NO MINORITY OPPOSITION GROUP HAS YET BEEN FORMED SINCE THE THREE FACTIONS COMPRISING THE PARTY LEFT WING ONLY ABSTAINED ON THE VOTE.

COMMENT: DESPITE FANFANI'S HOPEFUL CAVEAT, TODAY'S VOTE SUGGESTS THAT THE PARTY SECRETARY MAY FACE A DANGEROUS CHALLENGE TO HIS LEADERSHIP AT THE FORTHCOMING DC NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING.

5. THE FAR RIGHT CAMP WAS JOLTED JUNE 25 BY THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF MSI CO-PRESIDENT ADMIRAL BIRINDELLI THAT HE IS RESIGNING FROM THE PARTY AND FROM THE MSI PARLIAMENTARY GROUP. AFTER THE MAY 28 BRESCIA BOMBING, BRINDELLI HAD THREATENED TO LEAVE THE MSI OF IT DID NOT UNDERTAKE A VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN TO RID ITSELF OF THE FASCIST STIGMA AND ANY ASSOCIATION WITH THE EXTRA PARLIAMENTARY RIGHT. IN A PRESS STATEMENT TODAY BIRINDELLI REGRETTED THAT THE MSI HAD NOT ACCEPTED ALL ELEMENTS OF HIS FACE LIFTING PROGRAM AND SPECIFICALLY HAD NOT AGREED TO A RESIGNATION EN MASSE OF MSI LEADERS FROM PARTY FUNCTIONS IN ORDER TO SUBMIT TO A FORMAL "JUDGEMENT" ON THE ACCUSATION OF ATTEMPTING TO RECONSTITUTE THE FACIST PARTY (A STILL PENDING CHARGE LEVELLED AT ALMIRANTE IN MAY 1973 WHEN HIS PARLIAMENTARY IMMUNITY WAS LIFTED). COMMENT: BRINDELLI'S MOVE IS CERTAIN TO SHAKE FURTHER

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THE CONFIDENCE AND PUBLIC APPEAL OF A PARTY WHICH HAS FOUND ITSELF AT THE CENTER OF A MASSIVE ANTI-FASCIST CAMPAIGN SPARKED BY THE BRESCIA BOMBING AND CAPTURE OF NEO-FASCIST TERRORISTS AT RIETI. VOLPE

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